

**StCHRISTOPHER'S**  
**CREATING BRIGHTER**  
**FUTURES**

# Achieving Excellence

*Our service standards for children & young people*



Caring for children and young people since 1870

# Introduction

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St Christopher's aims to help children and young people achieve brighter futures. We try to make sure that our services are modern; that they are in line with best practice and that they really work. These services include:

- Fostering
- Children's homes
- Children's secure home
- Runaway children's services
- Assessment centres
- Housing & support services
- Floating support services
- Leaving care and aftercare services
- Homelessness intervention services

It is important to us that each person who receives a service, or each organisation that commissions a service, experiences the same high standard of service that we set out to deliver. We will work hard to identify and rectify any situation where this does not happen.

To help us deliver a high quality customer experience we:

- Set high standards
- Measure our performance against these standards
- Ask for feedback and use this to continually improve our services
- Feedback to users of our services our performance results, at least annually.

At the heart of achieving high standards is listening to what children and young people tell us about their services. We are proud of the strong track record of young people having a voice in our organisation and these service standards were written following wide consultation with staff and young people.

This document is written primarily for the children and young people who use our services to explain the standard of service that can be expected from St Christopher's. Equally important, however, are St Christopher's commissioners who pay for those services. So this document also represents a commitment to our commissioners; we will deliver the services you pay for in accordance with these standards and, if you are a commissioner, you can expect the same high standards from St Christopher's dealings with you.



**Jonathan J M Farrow**  
Chief Executive

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# Your home

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Most children and young people using St Christopher's services live in one of our homes, whether it is a children's home or housing with support. Others may live in a foster home arranged by St Christopher's. If you do not live in one of our homes you might wish to skip this section and move on to the next page.

We know that everyone's home is a very important place to them so, whatever type of home you live in, we will make sure that it is **safe, comfortable** and **homely**.

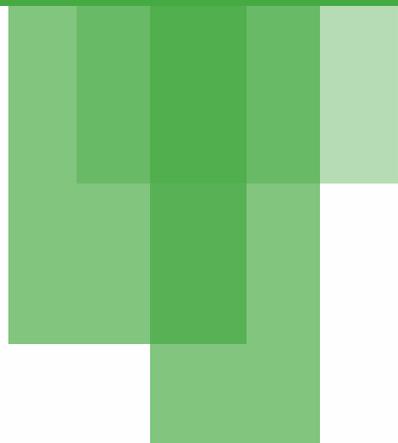
Where it is our responsibility, we will also ensure that your home is **clean** and **appropriately maintained** and **decorated**.

Wherever you live – even if it is in someone else's home or with another landlord, we will listen and offer help if you have any concerns about your home.

If St Christopher's arranges maintenance to your home, we will advise you when repair work is programmed and when you can expect it to be completed.

If St Christopher's or a contractor needs you to provide access to your accommodation to carry out maintenance, we will expect you to keep any appointments that are agreed.

We will do our best not to waste money in the delivery of your service and to always provide best value for money. We will ensure we keep costs under review and, if you rent your accommodation from St Christopher's or if you pay for any of our services, we will not pass on any unnecessary costs to you.





## Your support

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All children and young people using St Christopher's services do so because of the support we offer. Sometimes this support is delivered by our own staff and sometimes by foster carers.

We aim to ensure that:

- The support you receive is the support you need. If St Christopher's isn't able to provide all of the support you need, we will help you to arrange it from other people or organisations (e.g. doctors, schools, careers advisors or drug counsellors)
- Wherever possible, the support you receive is the support you want. We will ask you what support you want and take account of this when planning our service for you
- Your care worker, support worker or foster carer always
  - Listens to you
  - Treats you with respect and in a way that is appropriate to your age
  - Keeps appointments with you and attends these on time
  - Provides you with the help you need (in most cases this will be what is agreed and written down in your care plan or support plan)
- You can change your care worker or support worker if necessary
- You know how to make a complaint if you are unhappy. There is more information about complaints later on



## Our staff

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Our services are delivered by our staff. This is why we take every effort to ensure we recruit and invest in the right people. All our staff are recruited following rigorous recruitment processes and all service delivery staff are subjected to regular checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

We aim to ensure that:

- Recruitment panels for operational staff always include a young person and that their views are taken seriously
- Our staff are polite and professional at all times, whatever the method you use to contact them
- Our staff always work to the highest professional standards and are trained in understanding these Service Standards
- Our staff treat information about you sensitively and confidentially (although there are some exceptions when St Christopher's may be required to share information about you)
- All staff adhere to St Christopher's code of conduct
- All staff are fair, honest and treat you with respect

# Consultation and Participation

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We want you to have a say about the way our services are run. To make this possible, there are number of ways for you to be involved. For example you can:

- Tell your support worker, care worker or foster carer what you think about the service you receive
- Tell us what you think of the service you are receiving – see “Asking for your views” later in this document
- Take part in meetings at your home or service to decide things like activities, menus, decoration, furnishings etc. Depending on where you live, you might also be able to get involved in things such as decorating and gardening
- Have a say in various aspects of how St Christopher’s is run through being involved with C4C in England or Voices and Participation in the Isle of Man. These groups of staff and young people meet regularly to look at how St Christopher’s can provide even better services.

For our part, St Christopher’s will:

- Ask what you think we could do better
- Listen to what you have to say
- Take your suggestions seriously
- Conduct satisfaction surveys every 12 months
- Feedback the results in an annual review, so you can see how we are doing

We will also use feedback from house meetings, team meetings, grumble sheets, complaints and any other ways you want to tell us what you think. Wherever possible, we will use this feedback to make our service to you better.



# Communication

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We want you to keep in contact with us so we aim to ensure that all communication is dealt with efficiently and quickly.

We deal with all contact in a way that is transparent and will provide clear and accurate information and be held accountable for this.

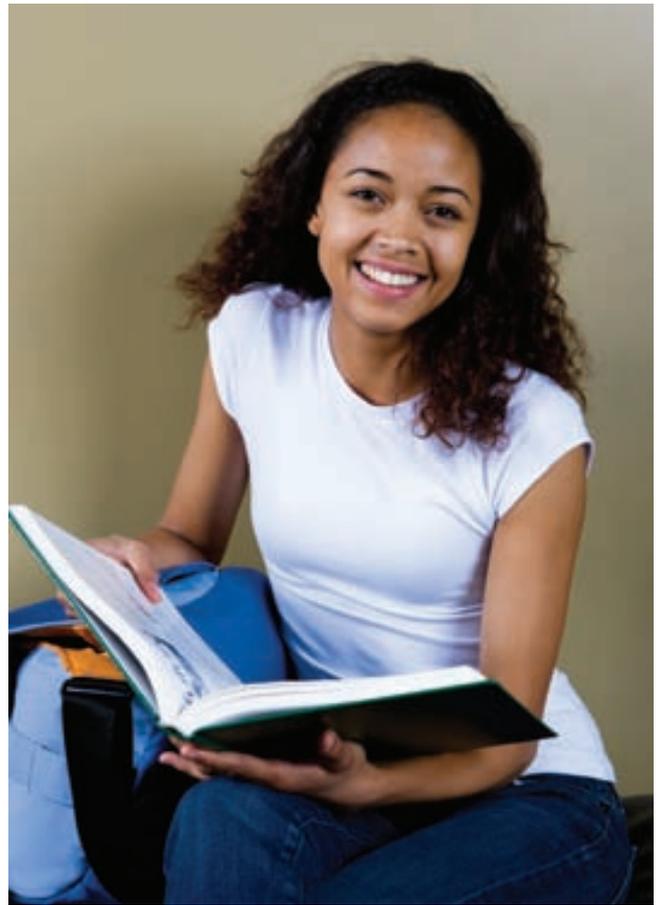
We will use plain and clear language, ensuring all the people who use our services have equal access to the information they need, delivered in a way that suits them.

Documents intended for our service users are submitted for their consideration to ensure that the language is clear and easy to understand. C4C and Voices and Participation award their own 'Approved' logo to documents they have approved as clearly understandable.

Where requested, we will provide information and material relating to our services in a range of formats to ensure that the information is accessible to as many people as reasonably possible.

When you contact us:

- We know how important it is to have the telephone answered personally and speedily, we aim to answer all calls promptly
- We will monitor response times by the use of mystery shopping and customer feedback. These methods will be used to check our performance at achieving this target
- Telephone calls will always be answered with the name and location of the staff member, so you know exactly who you are talking to
- All staff will be helpful and polite and make sure you get the support, advice, or information you require
- Due to the nature of our services, there may be times when it is not possible for a member of staff to answer the telephone. When this happens, staff will make sure that answer machines are switched on, that messages are listened to as soon as possible and that all messages are responded to promptly – and certainly no later than the next working day
- If you write to us we will make every effort to respond within 5 working days



# Diversity

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Our services are as diverse as the people who provide and use them. We do not discriminate against individuals or groups and we demonstrate this by having open recruitment and referral processes.

We aim to ensure that:

- You are not discriminated against for any reason
- Cultural diversity amongst staff, children and young people is respected and celebrated
- Your personal cultural needs are respected and catered for
- If you wish, you are helped to make contact with local cultural groups, organisations or services

Because we value diversity, all our services have diversity action plans to help achieve these aims.

We monitor access to our services and regularly check that the way we treat people is fair. We look at who makes complaints, or is involved in incidents and at satisfaction survey results to ensure we are not discriminating against particular groups.



# Asking for your views

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Your views are important to us and we will ask for these in a number of different ways including:

- Stakeholder surveys
- Satisfaction surveys
- Specific consultation exercises
- Suggestion boxes
- Mystery shopping
- Complaints and positive feedback process
- Annual reviews of safeguarding and complaints

When we ask for your views we will:

- Feed back the results of what you have told us
- Not waste your time by asking for your views and then ignoring them
- Tell you what we are going to do as a result of what we have heard



# Complaints & Positive feedback

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We would love our services to run smoothly all the time, but unfortunately sometimes things go wrong, and we will want to put that right. **You have a right to complain.**

We will try to make sure that everyone who uses our services knows how to make a complaint.

When you complain we will:

- Take your complaint seriously
- Deal with it promptly in accordance with our target timescales
- Keep you informed of progress until it has been resolved
- Try to find out what went wrong and why
- Tell you what we have done about it and what we will do to try to make sure it doesn't happen again
- Advise you of your right to appeal

Depending on the service you receive, and the seriousness of the complaint, it may also be a requirement to inform the Local Authority, or Ofsted, or the local safeguarding board in England, or the Registration and Inspection Unit in the Isle of Man. These organisations may want to undertake their own investigations.

For more details of how to complain, please refer to our complaints and positive feedback booklet.

Of course, we are always delighted when we receive **positive feedback**. It tells us where we are getting things right and helps us to continue improving. You can use the same form to record a complaint or a compliment, our complaints and positive feedback booklet will give you more information.

# Finally....

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Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet. If you have any comments, or would like to become involved in making sure that we are keeping to our promises, please speak to your care worker, support worker or foster carer.

We would also like to thank the members of C4C and other young people and staff who helped us to develop these standards.

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